

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body, characterized by extruding a raw material containing silicon carbide particles to obtain a honeycomb structure, firing the honeycomb structure, then subjecting the fired honeycomb structure to a heat treatment in an oxygen-containing atmosphere to obtain a porous honeycomb structure with an oxide film on the surface of the porous honeycomb structure, and loading, on the surface of the porous honeycomb structure via the oxide film, a catalyst containing alumina and ceria as main components, wherein the heat treatment is conducted in an atmosphere containing oxygen and 5-30% steam by volume.

7. (Previously Presented) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 6, wherein the heat treatment is conducted by heating a target substance directly with a heat generated by burner combustion using natural gas as a fuel.



8. (Previously Presented) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 6, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of 800 to 1,400°C.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body, characterized by extruding a raw material containing silicon carbide particles to obtain a honeycomb structure, subjecting the honeycomb structure to binder removal and then to a heat treatment, in an oxygen-containing atmosphere, then firing the resulting honeycomb structure to obtain a porous honeycomb structure with an oxide film on the surface of the porous honeycomb structure, and loading, on the surface of the porous honeycomb structure

via the oxide film, a catalyst containing alumina and ceria as main components wherein the heat treatment is conducted in an atmosphere containing oxygen and 5-30% steam by volume.

10. (Original) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 9, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of 400 to 1,000°C.

11. (New) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 10, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of no more than 1,000°C.

12. (New) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 11, wherein the heat treatment is conducted by heating a target substance directly with a heat generated by burner combustion using natural gas as a fuel.

13. (New) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 8, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of no more than 1,400°C.

14. (New) A method for preparing a silicon carbide-based catalyst body according to Claim 13, wherein the heat treatment is conducted by heating a target substance directly with a heat generated by burner combustion using natural gas as a fuel.